

Can't You See the Sea Changing?

Zineb Sedira

Exhibition Notes | Gallery 2 | Sat 29 April - Sun 6 August 2023

DCA

Dundee Contemporary Arts

152 Nethergate
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Scottish Charity No. SCO26631

Open Tue - Sun 11:00-18:00
Open late Thu 19:00
Admission free

www.dca.org.uk

INTRODUCTION TO THE EXHIBITION

This major solo exhibition by Zineb Sedira, developed in collaboration with De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill-on-Sea, marks the artist's first solo exhibition held in UK public galleries for over 12 years. The exhibition spans a period from 2008 to the present day and brings together photography, installation, film and archival material in a constellation of seafaring traces.

Throughout her career, Sedira has become a leading voice in addressing the question of what it means to live between different cultures, particularly in relation to her home countries of Algeria, France and the UK. The artist often brings together autobiographical narration, fiction and documentary genres; and through her varying approaches to storytelling, interrogates what she refers to as 'spaces where mobility expires'. She often focuses on individuals' abilities, or not, to depart, return, escape, or exist in transit between certain lands and identities. Whilst her narratives are embedded with histories of migration and exile, through her work Sedira considers what it means to be transported through visionary acts of imagination – acts that carry us to different places through the merging of past and present time frames.

Can't You See the Sea Changing? focuses on Sedira's ongoing investigation into the conditions of transnational trade, identity and migrant consciousness in a post-colonial context, within which the sea is a recurring motif and understood as an enigmatic yet geopolitically charged space. The exhibition's title is directly evocative of rapidly shifting coastlines and geopolitical borders, where the legacy of colonialism and greed has created a climate crisis that sees shores swallowed by the sea, and bodies of water dry up inland.

Images of imposing lighthouses, abandoned shipwrecks, and eroded rocks are layered with the memories, daily experiences and tragic deaths of those who have moved across surrounding seas. By highlighting these human narratives in her work, Sedira builds an oceanic archive that unearths stories of migration and movement that would otherwise remain invisible, whilst demonstrating the power of images to reconstruct our understanding of history. Through the artist's analytical eye, the exhibition draws upon her ongoing exploration of archival processes and the different 'windows' or thresholds that they can open up.

The significance of lighthouses as architectural and political landmarks is explored in several works in the exhibition, including photographs from the series *Broken Lens* (2011) and *Museum of Traces* (2013), and the lighthouse keeper logbooks revealed in *Registre du phare* (2011), which mark through their quotidian accounts the advent of Algeria's independence in 1962. An immersive installation of Sedira's multi-screen film and sound installation, *Lighthouse in the*

sea of time (2011), explores two historic lighthouses in Algeria – Cap Caxine and Cap Sigli – that were built during French colonial rule.

As imposing structures set amidst the ocean and on the tip of coastlines, lighthouses stand as witnesses to the many journeys made, often unsuccessfully, by migrant boats. The fragmented nature of these vistas and viewpoints is conjured by the photographic landscape of *Shattered Carcasses and Architecture of the Forsaken* (2008-2009), which transports viewers to Nouadhibou on the coast of Mauritania, one of the main departure points on the northwest coast of Africa towards the Canary Islands, and from there to Europe. The rusty abandoned ships rotting in the sea evoke the tragedy of failed journeys and the ecological disaster imminent in their decay. This situation is intensified by the fact that Western countries continue to dispose of their waste in Mauritania and the wider African continent. Sedira presents us with a post-industrial vision of death, decay and waste.

Additionally, the exhibition features a never-before-seen series of photographs titled *Sea Rocks* (2011- 2022) that documents the eroded curvatures of rock formations Sedira came across at Cap Sigli Lighthouse. Displayed on free-standing wooden structures reminiscent of false walls in a theatrical stage set, the images are given sculptural presence within the gallery. There are images within images in the three-channel film installation, *Transmettre en abyme* (2012), in which the viewer is immersed in photographs captured by Yves ‘Baudelaire’ Colas, a photographer who immortalised with his camera thousands of boats as they entered and exited the port of Marseille from 1935 to 1985. These images are now maintained by the film’s protagonist, Hélène Detaille, who takes us on a journey through the images, attempting to open up and understand Colas’ compulsive archiving of these maritime movements.

The artist draws upon her personal history and close connections to Algeria, France and the UK. Sedira’s work questions singular narratives of nationhood, looking to archives as a way to deconstruct dominant narratives. She often starts from the personal before moving to a broader political conversation, featuring herself, family members or people she knows. Sedira’s interest in recreating spaces within spaces and images within images is evident throughout the exhibition. Building upon her 2019 installation, *Way of Life*, which comprised a photographic diorama of the artist’s living room, as well as the set designs presented within her Venice Biennale exhibition, Sedira has recreated part of her Brixton studio within DCA’s gallery space. By presenting archival objects, maritime collectibles and furniture from this workspace, the artist reveals the significance of personal archive and memory within her practice, as well as the material traces that form part of her own connection to both sea and land.

GLOSSARY

Transnational trade: the operations of large-scale corporations and companies whose research, manufacturing, assembly and retail activities are spread between a number of different countries. Transnational trade is generally not restricted or regulated by national governments, which can result in companies prioritising profits ahead of human rights and environmental concerns.

Migrant consciousness: the lived experience of a person who is a migrant, and their awareness of the implications of this status on their daily life. A migrant may leave their country for many reasons, for example in order to work, study or join family. Other people feel they must leave to escape discrimination, poverty, political unrest, gang violence, natural disasters or other serious circumstances.

Post-colonial: happening in or relating to the period after the end of colonial rule.

Geopolitical: relating to how politics and international relations affect the geographical factors of a country or area of the world, for example in things like war treaties, trade agreements and climate change coalitions.

Colonialism: the action or process of taking control of an area or a country that is not your own, especially by using force, then settling among and establishing political and economic control over the indigenous people that live there.

Ecological disaster: a catastrophic event regarding the natural environment that is due to human activity. This point distinguishes environmental disasters from other disturbances such as natural disasters and intentional acts of war such as nuclear bombings. These disasters have included deaths of wildlife, humans and plants, or severe disruption of human life or health, possibly requiring migration.

Post-industrial: nations, often in the West such as the UK, who have transitioned from an economy earning its wealth through the manufacturing of goods to an economy of services, with the direct production of goods moved elsewhere. Post-industrial society services are often orientated towards newer disciplines such as technology and cybernetics.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Zineb Sedira (born 1963, Paris), lives in London and works between Algeria, Paris and the UK. Sedira represented France at the 59th Venice Biennale (2022) and was awarded a special mention for her exhibition *Dreams Have No Titles*. The exhibition was adapted to represent France at the 14th Gwangju Biennale Pavilion in South Korea, which recently opened and runs until summer 2023.

Recent solo exhibitions include De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill-on-Sea (2022), Bildmuseet (Umeå, Sweden, 2021), SMOCA (Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art) (USA, 2021), Jeu de Paume (Paris, 2019), IVAM-Institut Valencià d'Art Modern (Spain, 2019), Beirut Art Center (Lebanon, 2018), Sharjah Art Foundation Art Spaces (UAE, 2018), Art On the Underground (London, 2016).

Sedira has previously shown in institutions such as Tate Britain, Centre Pompidou, Mori Museum, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Musée d'Art Moderne of Algiers, Brooklyn Museum, Mathaf – Arab Museum of Modern Art, Gwangju Museum of Art, and MMK Museum für Mordern Kunst, as well as in biennials and triennials, including the Venice Biennale (2001 and 2011), the Triennial for photography and video at the Institute of Contemporary Photography in New York (2003), the Sharjah Biennial (2003 and 2007), the Folkestone Triennial (2011), New Orleans' International art exhibition (2017) and the Liverpool Biennial (2021).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The artist would like to extend her gratitude to her galleries: Goodman Gallery, London, and Kamel Mennour, Paris. With additional thanks to FLUXUS; Joseph Constable, João Conceição and the install team at De La Warr Pavilion; and to Beth Bate and DCA's exhibitions and technical teams.

INFORMATION SPACE

Visit the Information Space next to the galleries to learn more about the exhibition. Here you will find a video interview with the artist, alongside the reading materials listed below that have been influential to their thinking.

READING LIST

Dreams Have No Titles, NERO Editions, 2022

Zineb Sedira: Saphir, Kamel Mennour, 2006

Zineb Sedira, Sharjah Art Foundation, 2018

Zineb Sedira, Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, 2019

Esa Aldegheri, *Free to Go: Across the World on a Motorbike*, 2022

R. G. Grant, *Lighthouse: An Illuminating History of the World's Coastal Sentinels*, 2018

TALKS AND EVENTS

For more information and to book tickets visit www.dca.org.uk

In the Evening There is Feeling: Reading Akwugo Emejulu and Esa Aldegheri

Thu 1 June, 18:00–19:30

Create Space

Free, but ticketed

Please book in advance

Led by DCA's Exhibitions Team, *In the Evening There is Feeling* is DCA's reading group. It takes its name from Gertrude Stein's 1914 book *Tender Buttons* and focuses, in an informal and welcoming way, on feminist and queer texts from the worlds of art and literature.

For this joint session as part of Zineb Sedira's and Saoirse Amira Anis' exhibitions, we will be considering two selected books – *Fugitive Feminism* by Prof Akwugo Emejulu and *Free to Go* by Dr Esa Aldegheri.

Free to Go charts a story of shrinking and expanding liberties and horizons, and of motherhood, womanhood, xenophobia and changing geopolitical situations. Author Dr Esa Aldegheri examines the challenges of navigating a world where many assume that women ride pillion, both on a motorbike and within relationships. Part around-the-world adventure, part-literary exploration of womanhood, *Free to Go* is about the journeys that shape and transform us.

For Anis' selection, we will be exploring *Fugitive Feminism*, where sociologist Prof Akwugo Emejulu combines the concepts 'fugitive' and 'feminism' to signal that Black women's becoming must be grounded in a collective process of speculative dialogue and action for liberation. This audacious manifesto investigates Black women's processes of divesting from humanity, drawing on the legacies of bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Angela Davis and others in the pantheon of Black feminism.

Digital copies of selected excerpts from the books will be sent out to all participants upon booking a place.

In the Evening There is Feeling: Listening to Studio One Soul

Thu 22 June, 18:00–19:30

Create Space

Free, but ticketed

Please book in advance

As part of Sedira's exhibition, instead of just thinking about writers and poets, we will be also considering musicians who have been influential to the artist. We will be listening instead of reading.

This session will focus on the 2001 fusion album, *Studio One Soul* which explores the indisputable link between Jamaican reggae and American soul music. Featuring one of Sedira's favourite songs, *Express Yourself* sung by Leroy Sibbles, this thoughtful collection of covers adds new depth and texture to longstanding soul classics, reinforcing the legacy of Black American music.

Over the course of this event, we will spend some time listening closely together to excerpts from this album, discussing the narrative power of covers and the feeling of soul music. You can listen to the full album on YouTube and stream it on many other online platforms.

In Conversation:

Dr Esa Aldegheri and Beth Bate

Thu 29 June, 18:00 – 19:30

Gallery 2

Free, but ticketed

Please book in advance

Join DCA Director Beth Bate for a conversation with writer, researcher, and educator Dr Esa Aldegheri. Jumping off from her recent book *Free To Go*, which we will be covering as part of our DCA reading group *In The Evening There is Feeling*, this conversation will explore the ideas and waters that flow between the exhibitions and Dr Aldegheri's work. We will touch upon ideas of identity and migration, intercultural connectivity, shared histories, waters and post-colonial practices, as well as shifting borders swallowed by both policy and the sea.

Dr Aldegheri is a multilingual writer, educator and researcher with a PhD in community education and migration studies. She works as a Research Associate at the University of Glasgow. Her non-fiction debut *Free to Go* (John Murray Press, 2022) moves beyond the parameters of a simple travel narrative to explore different aspects of freedom and borders, both geopolitical and

personal. It is a story about travelling from Orkney to New Zealand on a motorbike shared with a willing companion, interwoven with a parallel tale of diminished liberties linked to the author's experiences of motherhood, Brexit and pandemic restrictions. Dr Aldegheri's non-fiction writing has also been published by Granta, Gutter Press, the Dangerous Women Project and others. Her poetry has been read on Radio 4 and Radio Scotland and features in several anthologies. She is from Scotland and Italy, and lives by the sea near Edinburgh.

Live Described Exhibition Tour with Juliana Capes

Thu 13 July, 11:30–12:30

Gallery 2

Free, but ticketed

Please book in advance

Join artist and visual describer Juliana Capes for a live described tour of the exhibition. With more than 15 years' experience providing audio descriptions and interpretation for galleries across Scotland, Capes has developed a poetic and emotional describing style which expands on and illuminates artworks in new ways, particularly for audiences who are blind, have low vision, or sensory impairments.

The tour will move through Sedira's exhibition, offering visual descriptions of a selection of the artworks on display and Capes will spend time elaborating on the exhibition to encourage slow looking, listening, and contemplation.

Capes is a visual artist with a rich multidisciplinary practice. She exhibits regularly, recently including the Alchemy Film Festival, Edinburgh Art Festival, Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop and Fruitmarket Gallery.

As a Visual Descriptor, Capes has trained and consulted many of Scotland's leading art organisations. She has been Lead Artist on the National Galleries of Scotland's Visual Impairment Programme since 2002, where she rethinks access to visual art. As well as 20 years of professional experience in the field of participatory practice, disability and arts accessibility, Capes has lived experience of neurodiversity and disability, as a dyspraxic artist and the parent carer of two children who also have dyspraxia and learning disabilities.

This event is open to all visitors wishing to experience our galleries in a new light. Guide dogs are always welcome in our galleries. If you require any further assistance, please contact our visitor services team.

ARTIST'S CHOICE SCREENINGS

These three films have been selected by Zineb Sedira to accompany her exhibition in Gallery 2.

The Battle of Algiers

Sun 7 May, 17:15

Cinema

Please see website for prices and to book tickets

Winner of the Golden Lion at the 1966 Venice Film Festival and nominated for three Oscars, *The Battle of Algiers* is a unique, ground-breaking film revered by filmmakers such as Ken Loach to Christopher Nolan.

Shot in a gritty documentary-esque style cultivated by director Gillo Pontecorvo, the film makes pioneering use of amateur actors, including real-life guerrilla fighter Saadi Yacef (who co-produced the film). The result is a palpable sense of realism, particularly in the film's unforgettable crowd scenes. The film's accuracy is such that it has been co-opted by would-be colonisers (including screening as part of Pentagon training programmes) to illustrate guerilla strategy. More importantly, it has become a cultural touchstone for those who are oppressed and displaced by invasion and occupation, and is a still-relevant indictment of the ills of imperialism.

Dir: Gillo Pontecorvo

Italy/Algeria 1966 / 2h 1m / 15 /

French and Arabic with English subtitles

F for Fake

Wed 31 May, 20:30

Cinema

Please see website for prices and to book tickets

Trickery. Deceit. Magic. *In F for Fake*, a free-form sort-of documentary by Orson Welles, the legendary filmmaker (and self-described charlatan) gleefully reengages with the central preoccupation of his career: the tenuous lines between illusion and truth, art and lies. Beginning with portraits of the world-renowned art forger Elmyr de Hory and his equally devious biographer, Clifford Irving, Welles embarks on a dizzying journey that simultaneously exposes and revels in fakery and fakers of all stripes – not the least of whom is Welles himself. Charming and inventive, *F for Fake* is an inspired prank and a clever examination of the essential duplicity of cinema.

Dir: Orson Welles

France/Iran/West Germany 1973 /

1h 28m / 15

The Pan-African Festival of Algiers

Tue 13 June, 20:30

Cinema

Please see website for prices and to book tickets

The First Pan-African Cultural Festival took place in Algiers in July 1969 and gave rise to a collective film directed by William Klein. This film, *The Pan-African Festival of Algiers*, takes the form of an essay which gives coherence to a huge range of visual materials: posters, photographs,

drawings, archive footage of African anti-colonial struggles as well as sequences taken from the 1969 festival, such as interviews, rehearsals, concerts and speeches.

The film's production coincided with the emergence of cinema from the Global South on an international level, often circulating alongside the films of the new waves that emerged from the end of the 1950s and the early 1960s onwards. Another trend found its second wind at this time: militant cinema with revolutionary aims of social intervention entered a golden age around the second half of the 1960s and into the 1970s. For most of the personalities who appeared in *The Pan-African Festival of Algiers* it was necessary to go beyond the model of 'Négritude' proposed by Senegalese poet, politician and cultural theorist Léopold Senghor, creating a new link between culture and national and continental liberation.

Dir: William Klein

Algeria 1969 / 1hr 42m / 15 / French with English subtitles

FOR YOUNGER VISITORS AND FAMILIES

Create Space

Tue – Sun, 11:00–18:00

Free, drop in

Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times

Create Space is located between Gallery 1 and the Information Space and is a flexible, comfortable and imaginative environment; a space in which people of all ages can see, think, make and do together. Here you can find displays, child-safe materials and art activity sheets inspired by our current exhibitions.

DIY art making activities will include thinking about journeys and sea crossings, making maps, board games and rope sculptures. Our art library for children is there for you to browse and our Play Box has safe play for our youngest visitors.

Family Art Labs

Sun 28 May and Sun 23 July,
11:00–13:00

Create Space

Free, but ticketed

Please book a separate ticket for each person who is attending
Suitable for all ages 3+

Family Art Labs offer relaxed time and space to get making as a family, with creative activities and techniques introduced by local artists. Stay as long as you like or leave when you need to, these sessions are completely flexible but try to be with

us at the start. Each date will have a new theme or technique to explore.

Inspired by our current exhibitions, you can expect a range of materials with the sea as a key feature. We have lots of creative ideas and projects to finish on the day or to take home. We look forward to sharing and making with you.

Messy Play for 0-3s

Sun 21 May and Sun 11 June,
10:00–11:00

Tue 23 May and Tue 13 June,
10:00–11:00 and 11:30–12:30

Fri 26 May and Fri 16 June,
13:00–14:00

Create Space

Free, but ticketed

Please book a separate ticket for each person who is attending
Suitable for babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers accompanied by an adult

Join us for messy, sensory, and creative time for you with your little ones. Sessions respond to our exhibitions with activities designed to engage our youngest visitors together with their big people.

You can expect an art activity, a sensory play activity and lots of ideas for things to do at home or out and about. There are a variety of days and times available each month to give as many people as possible the chance to try the activities. Each session will be led by DCA's Art Therapist, Vicky Armstrong, and an artist tutor with activities changing each month.

Soundplay Drop-In Sessions

Sat 13 May and Sat 10 June,

14:00–16:00

Create Space

Free, drop in

Children must be accompanied

by an adult at all times

Suitable for all ages 3+

Join the Soundplay team for some hands-on experimenting with digital tools for creative sound and image making.

Soundplay are a team who create multi-sensory, audio-visual playgrounds where sound, animation and interactive technology collide. They design for people of all backgrounds and abilities, so their work is accessible to everyone.

Come along for a rich audio visual experience and tips on low-cost kit you can use at home.

GALLERY 1

symphony for a fraying body Saoirse Amira Anis

Gallery 1

Sat 20 May – Sun 6 August

This exhibition debuts a new body of work by Dundee-based artist Saoirse Amira Anis.

Anis' practice prioritises radical care, informality and empathy. Her work is informed primarily by Black queer literature, her personal ancestry, and her own body as it moves through the world. She considers the ways in which the body holds ancestral and lived memories – particularly in relation to feelings of guilt, shame and inadequacy.

Her current research delves into parallels that can be drawn between Scottish and Moroccan folklore and rituals, particularly looking at how these are rooted in each country's deep connection to water.

JUST ASK

Our friendly Visitor Assistants are always happy to help with your questions.

LARGE PRINT, AUDIO & BRAILLE

Large print, audio and braille versions of this leaflet are available, please ask a Visitor Assistant for more information.

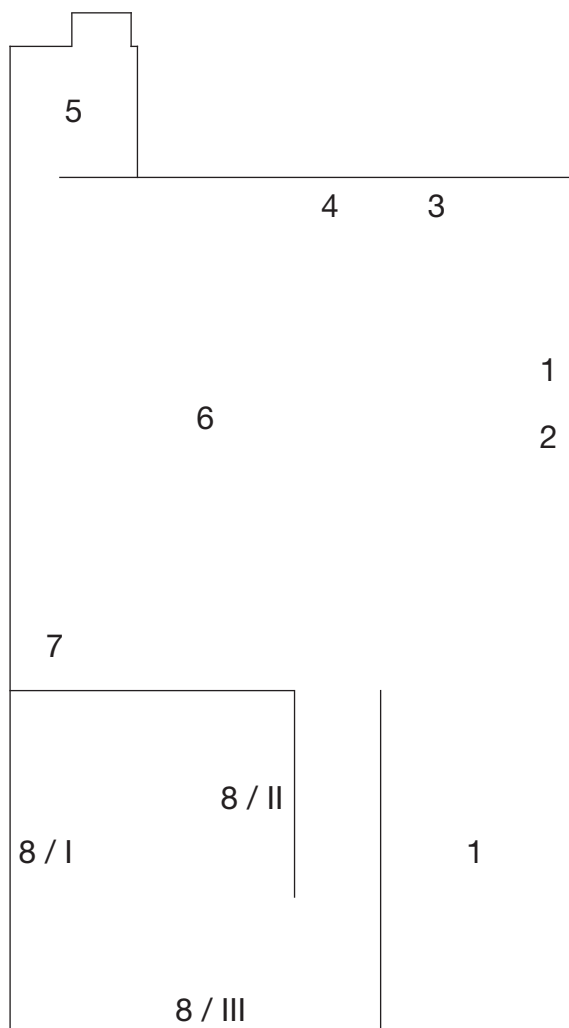
KEEP IN TOUCH

Keep up to date with the very latest from DCA by visiting www.dca.org.uk or by following us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Share your thoughts on the exhibition using **#helloDCA**.

SUPPORT DCA

Our exhibitions are always free to access, but DCA is a charity and donations are welcome and appreciated. You can tap to donate at one of the contactless points in our building or donate online at www.dca.org.uk/donate. Thank you for your support!

EXHIBITION FLOOR PLAN GALLERY 2



1. *The Artist's Studio and the Sea*
Mixed media installation; 2022

2. *Museum of Traces #2*
Photographic wallpaper; 2013

3. *Broken Lens*
Photographic wallpaper; 2011

4. *Registare de phare*
Photographic print on Hahnemühle
Fine Art Pearl paper mounted on
wooden shelf; 2011

5. *Transmettre en abyme*
Three-screen video installation; 2012

Part I: single-screen installation
on monitor, 18 minutes

Part II: two-screen installation
on monitors, 15 minutes

6. *Sea Rocks*
Photographic print on Canson Infinity
Photo Lustre Premium resin coated
paper mounted on MDF; 2011–2022

7. *Shattered Carcasses and
Architecture of the Forsaken*
18 light boxes with electric cables;
2009

8. *Lighthouse in the Sea of Time*
Six-screen video installation; 2011

8 / I: Four-screen video projection,
15 minutes

8 / II: *The Life of a Lighthouse
keeper*, single-screen installation
on monitor, 12 minutes

8 / III: *La Montee... , Names
Through Time: Keeper's Logbook
and Handwriting through Time:
A Visitor's Book, A Museum of
Traces*, single-screen installation
on monitor, 12 minutes